

# What does the future of water services look like for Thames-Coromandel?

**Consultation Document** 

#### HAVE YOUR SAY FROM 15 APRIL TO 15 MAY 2025

This is your guide to help our Council make one of the most important decisions for the district in many years.

Read through what the Government's Local Water Done Well reforms require all councils in Aotearoa New Zealand to do.

Explore the options that are available to TCDC. No matter what we do, changes are coming and you can be part of them.

#### **TELL US WHAT YOU THINK**



# Short on time? Here's a quick dive

Local Water Done Well is the Government's reform to help ensure we have safe, reliable and resilient water networks. There are some mandatory changes to how drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater are managed. But we have some choices about how we do this.

What does this mean for Thames-Coromandel? Change is coming to how these water services are managed and delivered, regardless. But you have the chance to help shape what this change looks like.

We're consulting on two broad options:

**Option 1** - Keeping these services 'in-house' and overseen by our Council which already runs the district's three waters. They would be financially separated from other Council services.

**Option 2** – Working with other councils to set up a new water organisation to manage our water services, based on what our communities need and want.

Regardless of which option is progressed, water services will remain in Council ownership, and water services will still be delivered. However, how water services are run will change, and this will impact ratepayers today, and future generations.

We've researched the advantages and disadvantages of all options and detailed what those are in this consultation document.

We're asking you to consider which option you think will serve our communities best in the long term.

Consultation runs from 15 April to 15 May. Feedback will be considered by our elected members who will decide on an option in June. This will be presented to the Government as part of a Water Services Delivery Plan by September, for their approval. Implementation of these changes will occur from 2026.

This is your chance to help influence real change.

#### **TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.**

Details on how to give feedback are at the back of this booklet.

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Aotearoa New Zealand is facing long-standing challenges to deliver infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services.

Collectively, the country needs to ensure drinking water is safe and that our networks of pipes and treatment plants are resilient to more severe weather events, the impacts of climate change, and are responsive to the needs of population changes.

In Thames-Coromandel District we also have local challenges to supply and treat more water during busy times in our district when the population can increase 400%. We need to ensure services are affordable, especially for many in our community on fixed incomes. We have managed our water services well, but all of this is putting pressure on the way we currently deliver our water services.

Local Water Done Well is the Government's nationwide plan to meet these challenges, with legislation that brings in new or stronger requirements on councils to manage, deliver and report on water services. We've considered how we might best meet these requirements by looking hard at our local needs and interests in Thames-Coromandel over the short and the long term, and the benefits and risks for us of different water service delivery options. We've also talked with other councils to look at what we could do together. Our local challenges have been front and centre in our thinking, and we have landed on two broad options for water services delivery.

Each option has pros and cons, but the new legislation means that how our water services are delivered will change no matter which option we choose. You can read more about these, including estimated cost differences, on pages 13-17.

Water is life – so making sure that water services are safe and sustainable is one of the most important decisions we will make for ourselves and for generations to come. While our Council does have a view on what might be the best way forward, it's right that we must consult with our communities on all practical options and provide you with the information you need to tell us what you think. This is what this document is about. Please consider this information carefully and give us your feedback by 15 May.

Len Salt

# How to have your say

Have your say on what you think is the best option for future water services delivery in our district.

Read through this consultation document carefully. We'll be holding information sessions where you can ask questions. Keep an eye on tcdc.govt.nz/lwdw for times and locations.

#### Give us your feedback:

**Online form:** tcdc.govt.nz/lwdw

**Paper:** Fill out the form at the back of this booklet, cut it out and hand it in at one of our TCDC service centres. Or, pick up a feedback form at a service centre or District Library, fill it out and hand it in.

Local Water Done Well uses some technical language. To help your reading, we have explained common terms on pages 19 and 20.

#### Timeline and next steps

- Feedback is needed by 5pm Thursday 15 May 2025.
- We will summarise submissions and draw out themes for elected members to consider and decide, which is expected to be in late June 2025.
- By 3 September 2025, Council needs to provide a Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) to the Government. The WSDP must identify Council's preferred future water services delivery model and an implementation plan to achieve that outcome.
- **2026 onward**, implementation of the final approach.

# Local Water Done Well, in a nutshell

Local Water Done Well is the Government's plan to address New Zealand's long-standing water infrastructure challenges. It keeps water assets locally owned and recognises the importance of local decision making and flexibility for communities and councils to choose the best way to deliver their water services. The Government has a strong emphasis on meeting economic, environmental and water quality requirements.

Some things will not change, regardless of the way we move forward:

- · Safe drinking water
- · Protecting the environment
- Meeting our needs
- · Adapting to climate change
- Water services and assets will remain in Council ownership, privatisation is prevented by legislation.

#### What will change

To future-proof our water services and show they can 'stand on their own two feet', the Government has introduced some new requirements (also known as regulations) and strengthened others. Whatever delivery option we choose, we must make sure that we can:

- Meet the requirements set out in legislation that ensure the safety and quality of drinking water and protect the environment.
- Manage water services effectively and efficiently.
- Invest in maintaining or replacing water services infrastructure such as pipes, pumps and treatment plants so they remain in good condition and are resilient to risks such as natural hazards and climate change.

The Government will also monitor prices and investment for our water services – through economic regulation – which is a protection mechanism to ensure prices are fair and there is enough investment to deliver safe, reliable water services.

Whether councils choose to self-deliver water services or join a new water organisation, Local Water Done Well requires transparency about the cost and performance of water services. For councils choosing a self-delivery model, this means:

- separating money received and spent on water services from other Council money - meaning water pays for water (known as ring-fencing), and
- planning and reporting separately and publicly on water services.

## What is ring-fencing?

Reserving funds for a specific purpose so they cannot be used elsewhere.

See our glossary in the back for definitions of other terms.

# We need to show the Government how we will deliver these changes

Like all councils across the country, we need to provide a Water Services Delivery Plan to the Government by 3 September 2025. This document will need to show how we plan to deliver water services in the future, how it is financially sustainable by 2028 and in the future. It also will have information on where and when investment will be made over the next 10 years to meet regulatory requirements that keep our water services safe and reliable.

In developing this plan, we will consider how we will continue to meet community expectations for water services, honour our Treaty of Waitangi commitments, and ensure our communities still receive the services from the rest of Council that you need. More about Local Water Done Well can be found on the Department of Internal Affairs website:

dia.govt.nz/Water-Services-Policy-and-Legislation

#### What this means for you:

#### If Council currently provides your water services:

- Your water services will continue to be safe and reliable.
- You will have a better understanding of what it costs to delivery water services as there will be specific reporting from the Council, or the water organisation.
- Prices might need to rise over time, but you will have more information and independent checks on the quality and cost of your water services.

#### If you have a private supply:

- There are no immediate changes to your arrangements.
- Your feedback is still important You may also need help from the water services provider (whether that be the Council, or a water organisation) if there are any big problems in supplying you with safe drinking water.

#### **WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK**

on which option you think will best support our community's water services needs now and into the long-term future.

# Our current water infrastructure assets









Figure 1: Thames-Coromandel water services snapshot

Planned investment over the next 10 years	Water supply	Wastewater	Stormwater
District-wide	\$55.0m	\$63.6m	\$24.5m

Planned investment o	over the next 10 years		
Thames Valley (south of Thames)	\$20.2m	\$0.5m •	\$6.3m •
Thames	\$4.7m	\$5.0m	\$16.1m
Thames Coast (north of Thames)	-	-	-
Coromandel	\$1.7m •	-	-
Oamaru Bay	-	-	-
Whangapoua	-	-	-
Matarangi	\$2.0m •	\$22.0m	\$3.2m
Opito Bay	-	-	-
Whitianga	\$13.7m	\$3.9m	\$3.0m •
Cooks Beach	-	\$1.1m •	\$1.9m •
Hāhei	\$3.5m •	\$3.3m •	-
Tairua	-	-	-
Pāuanui	\$1.6m •	\$2.1m •	\$1.2m •
Onemana	\$1.3m •	-	-
Whangamatā	\$1.3m •	\$2.5m •	\$9.2m
Overall investment	\$105.2m	\$104m	\$65.4m

# We've looked after our communities' water needs well, but there are challenges ahead

Water services delivery includes services for "three waters" including the networks of pipes and other infrastructure that allow water to be treated, transported and discharged.



#### Water supply,

to provide safe, reliable and sustainable water supply to the district.



#### Wastewater,

to provide services to collect, treat, and dispose of wastewater in a safe and sustainable way that protects public health and doesn't compromise ecosystems.



#### Stormwater,

to protect people and property from the effects of flooding and safeguard public health and the environment from the adverse effects of stormwater run-off.

In 2025, the average cost of water services for connected properties is around \$2,000 a year.

Based on the Long Term Plan, this is expected to reach about \$2,500 per year as we invest to meet our needs.

#### How are we doing, and what lies ahead?

Right now, our water services are working well. We've made big improvements to the quality of our drinking water. We are also working to replace our ageing water infrastructure – the pipes and other equipment that treat and supply your water.

We already meet the new financial sustainability test for our water services, but like many councils across the country, we have some longer-term challenges ahead to meet new requirements:

- We need to keep renewing our water
  infrastructure, as some of this will be coming
  to the end of its life in the next 15-30 years.
   Some of our treatment plants need to have their
  consents renewed shortly, and new standards
  may mean we need to invest more. This could
  mean we need to make some bigger investments
  in the next few decades, and these will add up.
- Climate change is putting pressure on our stormwater and wastewater networks, and they need to be resilient to impacts such as sea-level rise, and more frequent and severe weather events.
- Higher requirements for water services to protect health and the environment need to be met. This includes our responsibility to help community suppliers if they have significant problems, and to report more on how we are performing.
- We must also make sure that water remains affordable to our communities, including for our large older population on fixed incomes.

As a council we must also ensure that our Treaty commitments are met, and that changes to water services don't mean that other services we provide such as parks, roads, and rubbish can't be delivered.

#### Can we meet the challenges ahead?

We know that we can meet these requirements today, but the work we have done tells us we can expect costs to increase as we work to renew our infrastructure and meet future challenges. Moving to a joint water services organisation would give us a range of efficiencies and benefits, meaning a stronger ability to invest in our water services in the future, affordably.

To do this, we would need to join some other councils, with whom we will have some shared interests, and some interests that are unique to us, here in Thames-Coromandel. If we join a new water organisation, we will need to be sure that it meets our, and other

councils', needs. Importantly, this would mean that water assets, and the associated debt would transfer to the new water organisation that we would own a part of. We also need to make sure that by shifting responsibilities and revenue for water this won't impact the other services we deliver.

We have a choice to make, that will have both immediate and long-term implications for our community – we can continue to deliver water services on our own or join with some other councils. This move could start now, or in the future.

#### Things to think about

## Both options meet the anticipated requirements from Government

Any option would mean changes in the way we operate to meet the new requirements from the Government. The choice between the options comes down to differences in the level of direct control our Council will have over water services, and access to efficiencies from scale, a dedicated focus on water services, and alternative ways of financing water services. As our needs change over time, so do the benefits of the different options.

## A water organisation would not face higher borrowing costs than councils

Water services require big investments, which most councils fund through a combination of borrowing and rates.

As a council we can borrow relatively cheaply and affordably, through a special organisation known as the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA). Water organisations would be able to access the LGFA too.

However, there are some differences in how a council borrows and how a water entity borrows.

- Councils have borrowing limits, based on rules set by the LGFA. This is a ratio based on a council's borrowing compared to its revenue. We have 175% debt-to-revenue ratio with the LGFA and our own rules mean we keep debt below 150% to give us a buffer for a rainy day.
- Water organisations aren't like councils, they are more like utility companies (like electricity lines companies) - they would borrow in a different way. Most investment would be funded by debt rather than a combination of debt and water rates (which is how councils borrow). This means investment is paid back over a longer period so that those who benefit from the investment pay for the investment over a long timeframe. A water organisation would be able to borrow to much greater levels than councils, while still being financially healthy and sustainable. Guidance from the LGFA and DIA can be found in this factsheet on the DIA website - Financing water services delivery through establishing new water council-controlled organisations www.dia.govt.nz/Water-Services-Informationand-guidance-for-councils



How does the option address the challenges we face for long-term affordability and resilience?

What does the option cost?

What happens to the other things Council does?

Will we be able to meet our water needs, and what level of control do we need to be able to do that?

# Your options for water service delivery

We have looked at several options, and after careful consideration believe there are two broad options that will meet your needs.

# Continuing to deliver water services 'in-house' (option 1)

Continuing to deliver water services through Council, with the changes necessary to meet new legislative and regulatory changes. We would likely set up an internal water services unit.

## Join a new water services organisation, with other councils (option 2)

Join in the establishment of a new council-controlled water services organisation with some of our nearby councils. Because of our geographic location, there are three potential water organisations we could join. There is some variation between the options (which we explain later), but if we are to join one of these organisations, we would look at the option that best meets our needs as a community. This would include looking at our common interests and priorities for water services, geographic similarities, the level of influence we would have, and what water services could cost our community.

Figure 2: Options available





#### Other options considered

We also considered the option to establish a consumer trust organisation, either partly owned by Council and a trust, or wholly owned by a trust. We decided these options weren't right for us as we would likely have to borrow money from banks which is more expensive, and we would have less control over critical decisions than in other options.

We also looked at setting up a water services organisation on our own. This would work the same way as a multi-council water organisation except TCDC would be the only shareholding council. However we'd be unlikely to see enough benefits to outweigh the costs associated with running a water services organisation on our own.

2

#### **OPTION 1**

#### Deliver water services 'in-house'

The average cost per connection is expected to be:

**\$2,000** 

**\$2,500**2034

Under this option, we would continue to manage and deliver water services on our own, without partnering with other councils. However, we may share services with other councils, where it makes sense. We would be fully responsible for all day-to-day operations, maintenance, planning for future water needs, and repaying any water-related debt.

To help meet new Government requirements, we would likely set up a dedicated water services delivery unit within the Council. We could share certain services with neighbouring councils or contract some operations to an external water services organisation, but this would not provide the same level of cost savings as being a part of a joint water services organisation.

#### Internal Water Services Unit



#### **TCDC**

Water services delivered through internal business unit or division, with ringfencing of revenue and expenditure. New planning and reporting framework for water service providers will apply.

Independent reviews confirm that our investment plans can meet future needs over the next 10 years — though some adjustments may be required. This approach keeps decision-making entirely in our hands, including project priorities, funding, and rate-setting, but it may also mean higher costs and additional borrowing over time.

Figure 3: Advantages and disadvantages of staying 'in-house'

#### **Key advantages**

- Local decision-making: Our Council, familiar with local conditions, would decide on services and investments.
- Seamless integration: Water services can be easily coordinated with our other responsibilities (such as district planning and transport).
- Community accountability: Communication remains straightforward, with us continuing to engage directly with residents on water issues.
- Familiar structure: Day-to-day operations remain largely as they are now, which can help minimise transition costs or confusion.
- Opportunity to share services: We could share services with neighbouring councils to try and reduce costs or contract a water organisation to deliver services. This is not likely to lead to significant cost savings.

#### **Key disadvantages**

- Higher prices: Analysis indicates that this option would be more expensive – potentially costing customers an extra \$500-\$600 per year more – than if we joined a water services organisation.
- Longer-term challenges need to be funded: We need to fund major water infrastructure upgrades over the next 15–30 years, which are likely to become more expensive over time. This could require substantial borrowing and limit our ability to invest in other important areas like roads, parks, and playgrounds.
- Increasing requirements: We must meet tougher Government regulations on our own, which may lead to higher rates or more borrowing in the future.
- Limited opportunity for efficiencies: We wouldn't benefit from economies of scale that might come from partnering with other councils, potentially raising our long-term operating costs.
- Competition for staff and contractors

The forecasted costs (2034) presented in option 1 are modelled based on TCDC's current policies including use of debt which includes a maximum 30 year loan term associated with capital expenditure.

#### **OUR PREFERRED OPTION (OPTION 2) -**

Joining a new water services organisation, with other councils

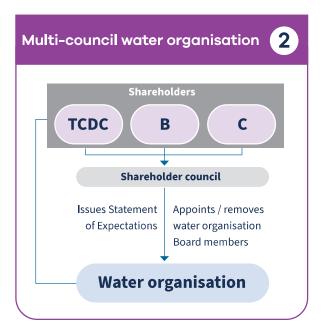
Average cost per connection

\$2,000

**\$1,950** 

Our preferred option would see our Council and nearby councils form a new water services organisation. This organisation would handle water services across all participating areas and take on each council's water-related debt, and assets.

A professional board of directors, appointed by the councils, would run the organisation from day to day. While we could guide the board and retain some key decisions, we wouldn't control every aspect of its work.



#### How do we have our say in a joint water organisation?

If we go with this option, there are some ways for us to monitor and direct the organisation to make sure your water services are being delivered well, and meet the needs of Thames-Coromandel. This would include:

- Appointing the board of directors, alongside the other councils, so we can make sure we have the skills and experience we want.
- Issuing a Statement of Expectations which sets priorities for the organisation, and how they will be measured. This guides the decisions and actions of the organisation which will need to give effect to it and report against it.
- Requiring regular reporting from the organisation on its performance, including through an annual report on progress, service standards and financial performance.
- Through negotiation, there are a number of additional protections, such as community engagement, that we would look to secure through the organisation's constitution.

The WSO forecast costs (2034) targets a level of borrowing at which we can be confident the organisation is able to service its debt repayment obligations using operating cash flow. Compared with TCDC's current policies, this results in the WSO maintaining a higher level of borrowing. Water organisations aren't like councils, they are more like utility companies (like electricity lines companies) – they would borrow in a different way. Most investment would be funded by debt rather than a combination of debt and water

rates (which is how councils borrow). This means investment is paid back over a longer period so that those who benefit from the investment pay for the investment over a long timeframe. A water organisation would be able to borrow to much greater levels than councils, while still being financially healthy and sustainable. Guidance from the LGFA and DIA can be found here - Financing water services delivery through establishing new water council-controlled organisations - dia.govt.nz

#### **OUR PREFERRED OPTION (OPTION 2) CONTINUED**

Figure 4: Advantages and disadvantages of joining a new water organisation with other councils

#### **Key advantages**

- Lower prices: Analysis indicates that this option would likely be cheaper – potentially saving customers \$500-\$600 per year by 2034 – than if we continued to deliver water services on our own.
- Specialist oversight: A professional, expert board can make informed decisions and respond quickly to service needs.
- Greater capacity: A larger combined organisation can hire more specialised staff and manage assets and new projects more effectively.
- Continuity of investment plans: The organisation would likely adopt the Council's current investment plans, which have been independently reviewed. These plans meet legislative requirements but may need further investment over the next 10-30 years.
- Long-term savings: By combining resources (such as maintenance services) across multiple councils, the organisation can drive down costs over time.
- Efficient borrowing: The organisation can borrow at similar rates to councils but takes a different borrowing approach that makes it easier to invest in infrastructure and maintain quality standards affordably.
- Better financial flexibility for the Council: With water debt removed from its books, the Council can redirect its financial capacity to other priorities as needed.

#### **Key disadvantages**

- Less local control: We would share decision-making and control with other councils. Decision-making may feel distant to residents in smaller communities.
- Transition challenges: Establishing the
  organisation is a large task, and coordinating
  the transition of water services, staff and
  debt may be complex. We would also need
  to manage any impact on other Council
  activities (like planning or customer service).
- Stranded costs: Some costs that are currently shared with water services may not be able to be transferred to the organisation meaning the Council could be left with some ongoing obligations.
- Uncertainty over interaction with other reforms: There are other reforms which will impact local Government. How these reforms interact and impact on local Government is not yet known, including how this could influence a water services organisation.

#### **OUR PREFERRED OPTION (OPTION 2) CONTINUED**

#### Who would we partner with?

If we decide to move forward with a new water services organisation, we'd join forces with one or more of our nearby councils. Three groupings are currently on the table, and we intend to use our relatively strong financial and operational position to negotiate a fair, balanced arrangement that serves Thames-Coromandel's best interests. Whichever combination we choose, our goal is to tap into shared expertise and economies of scale while still

reflecting each area's local priorities. We haven't yet decided which councils we'd partner with, but we'd work alongside them to establish clear governance arrangements and a unified plan for delivering water services—so that all participating communities benefit in the long run. We'd need to ensure that there were the right 'off-ramps' through any negotiation, transition, or establishment if substantial issues arise.

Figure 5: Potential joint water organisation groupings

#### Waikato sub-region Waikato Water Done Well

## A new water organisation, that would be established.

- Potential for up to seven Waikato councils to participate. Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council are not part of WWDW.
- Without a large council (such as Hamilton or Tauranga City Council), efficiencies of scale may not be as great.
- A larger number of councils may make it harder to align on common goals and resolve issues compared to a smaller group.
- While within the same regional boundary, they have different geographic challenges and needs to ours.

## Bay of Plenty Sub-region water organisation

- Western Bay of Plenty
   District Council and
   Tauranga City Council and others (such as Thames-Coromandel District
   Council) creating a shared organisation.
- While Tauranga is a major urban centre, Western Bay of Plenty covers a mix of urban and rural areas, similar to our own. We also have similar geographic challenges and resilience needs.

#### Hamilton and Waikato Water organisation

- A water services
  organisation being formed
  by Hamilton City Council,
  with Waikato District
  Council (and possibly
  other nearby councils).
- Fewer councils can make it easier to align on common goals and resolve issues compared to a larger group.
- While within the same regional boundary, they have different geographic challenges and needs to ours.

## Efficiencies of scale

Cost advantages gained by increasing the scale of operation.

# How to give feedback



**ONLINE** tcdc.govt.nz/lwdw



#### **PAPER - PICK UP A FORM**

- Cut out the form at the back of this booklet
  - at a TCDC customer services centre
- a District Library (Thames, Tairua, Whitianga)
- Fill it out and hand it in at a service centre or library

#### Consultation runs from 15 April to 15 May 2025

#### Want to find out more?

There is additional information, technical reports and Council reports available on our Local Water Done Well webpage – tcdc.govt.nz/lwdw

- What is Local Water Done Well? dia.govt.nz/Water-Services-Policy-and-Legislation
- How did the Council arrive at its preferred option? Options Assessment report on tcdc.govt.nz/lwdw
- What is the viability and sustainability of our current arrangements? Viability and Sustainability report on tcdc.govt.nz/lwdw
- Can we meet the new requirements in the next decade? Capital Programme Review report on tcdc.govt.nz/lwdw
- What is financial sustainability? Ensuring compliance with financial principles for water service providers guidance on dia.govt.nz/Water-Services-Information-and-guidance-for-councils
- How would a water services organisation borrow? Financing water services delivery through establishing
  new water council-controlled organisations dia.govt.nz/Water-Services-Information-and-guidance-forcouncils

# Common Local Water Done Well terms

Term	Explanation
Borrowing	Obtaining loans to pay for infrastructure upgrades or new facilities, with repayment spread over time. Because water infrastructure (like pipelines or treatment plants) is very expensive but long-lived, it is often funded through debt that is paid back over decades out of rates or user charges. New Zealand councils typically borrow via the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA) – a collective lending vehicle that gives councils access to loans at lower interest rates. Responsible borrowing allows current and future users to share the costs of big projects, a principle often called intergenerational equity.
Drinking water / potable water	Water that is safe to drink. Potable water that has been treated enough to meet drinking water standards. In council terms, potable water supply refers to the reticulated (piped) drinking water delivered to homes and businesses after treatment. Ensuring water is potable means removing or killing harmful microbes and contaminants through treatment processes.
Drinking Water Standards	The official standards that set safe limits for drinking water quality across New Zealand. Issued by Taumata Arowai under the Water Services Act 2021, these standards specify the maximum allowable levels of contaminants (like bacteria, nitrates, heavy metals, etc.) in drinking water and outline how to demonstrate compliance. All registered drinking water suppliers must ensure the water they provide meets these standards.  If water fails to meet a standard, suppliers must take action and notify the regulator and the public (e.g. issuing a boil water notice).
Economic regulation	Oversight of the economic performance of water service providers to ensure they are efficient, financially prudent, and charging fair prices. Because water services are natural monopolies (consumers can't choose another provider), an economic regulator steps in to protect consumers from excessive charges and poor service. New Zealand is setting up a water economic regulation regime modelled on the system used for electricity lines and gas pipelines. This will be administered by the Commerce Commission. Economic regulation will likely include controls or monitoring of water pricing, requirements for transparent accounting, and service quality measures. The goal is to make sure water providers invest adequately in infrastructure and operate efficiently, delivering safe and reliable services at the lowest feasible cost to ratepayers
Financial Sustainability	This means ensuring the water system can cover its costs now and in the future. A financially sustainable water service has enough income (from rates or user charges) to pay for day-to-day operations, maintenance, and long-term asset renewal or upgrades.
Harmonisation / Non- harmonisation	Price harmonisation means all customers across a water services organisation would pay roughly the same rate for water services, regardless of where they live. Non-harmonisation means prices remain different in each area, often reflecting the local cost of providing services.

Term	Explanation
Ring-fencing	A financial practice where funds are reserved for a specific purpose and cannot be used elsewhere. In water services, ring-fencing means revenue from water rates or charges must be used only for water-related costs and investments.
	Under the new system, the Commerce Commission will monitor compliance with ring-fencing rules to guarantee transparency and reinvestment in water infrastructure.
Stormwater	Stormwater is rainfall runoff that is channelled through drains and pipes to prevent flooding. Stormwater picks up contaminants from roofs, roads, and land (like sediment, heavy metals, or oils) and often flows, untreated, into streams, rivers, or the ocean. Managing stormwater is part of the water services councils provide.
	Good stormwater management includes networks of drains, culverts, and detention basins, as well as green infrastructure (like swales or wetlands) to slow and filter runoff. While not usually treated like wastewater, stormwater systems must comply with environmental regulations to minimise pollution. In the future it may be brought into the economic regulation regime.
Taumata Arowai	A dedicated water services regulator, established by the Water Services Act 2021. Taumata Arowai took over drinking water regulation from the Ministry of Health in late 2021, after serious water safety failures (like the 2016 Havelock North outbreak). It sets and enforces the Drinking Water Standards and rules to ensure suppliers provide safe drinking water.
	Taumata Arowai also has oversight of wastewater and stormwater environmental performance standards. In practice, this regulator monitors compliance (through audits and reporting), can issue directions or fines for breaches, and provides guidance to water suppliers.
Wastewater	Wastewater: Also known as sewage, this is used water that goes down drains from homes and businesses (toilets, sinks, showers, etc.). Wastewater contains organic waste, microbes, and chemicals that must be treated before it is released back into the environment.
	Under Local Water Done Well, a single national standard for wastewater environmental performance is being introduced, meaning all discharges should meet a high consistent standard across New Zealand.

# Tell us what you think!

What is your preferred option?	What is your age?
OPTION 1: Continuing to deliver water services in-house, with changes to meet new requirements.  Alternative option	0-20 21-30 31-40 41-5 51-60 61-70 71-80 81 ar over
OPTION 2: Joining a new water services organisation, with other councils.	Any other comments?
Preferred option	
Tell us what's important to you	
There are some key differences between the options, please rank by importance from 1-4 these key considerations:	
Affordability – ensuring that water services are delivered safely and sustainably, while managing prices to consumers.	
Community influence – your ability to shape water services decisions.	
Cultural input – hapū and iwi input into water decisions.	
Access to finance - more access to financing for water services and other Council activities	
hapū and iwi input into water decisions.  Access to finance - more access to financing for water services and	
normally live I live in (choose a community board area):	
Thames	Privacy statement
Coromandel-Colville	The information you provide is used for the purpose of obtaining feedback on TCDC's options under the Local Water Done Well reforms.
Mercury Bay	We must act in accordance with the requirements of
Tairua-Pāuanui	the Privacy Act 2020 and Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.
Whangamatā	When you provide feedback to us, your response will
I live outside Thames-Coromandel District	be publicly available. For more information on how we handle personal information, see our Council's Privacy Statement 2020 online. Please let us know if the
I own a property in the district but don't normally live here	information contains any sensitive information which you consider should not be publicly disclosed.

# Whakapā mai | Contact us



**Email:** customer.services@tcdc.govt.nz **Phone:** 07 868 0200

#### **Service Centres:**

515 Mackay Street, Thames 355 Kapanga Road, Coromandel Town 10 Monk Street, Whitianga 620 Port Road, Whangamatā 2 Manaia Road, Tairua (Tairua Library)

**Post:** Thames-Coromandel District Council Private Bag 1001, Thames, 3540